



[Home](#) › [Statistics](#) › [Labour](#) › [Employment and unemployment](#)
› [Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia](#) › February 2021



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Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia

Labour participation potential, underemployment and job attachment, job search experience, labour mobility, hours worked, industry and occupation.

Reference period February 2021

Released 7/07/2021

On this page

[Key statistics](#)

[What's new this issue?](#)

[Data downloads](#)

[What's new in 2021?](#)

[Post release changes](#)

[Methodology](#)

[Media releases](#)

Key statistics

In Feb 2021 (as published 7 July 2021)

- 2.2 million people who were not working wanted to work.
- 1.7 million people not working were available to start work immediately.
- 1.6 million people wanted to work more than their usual hours.
- Over half a million employed people worked fewer than their usual hours for economic reasons.
- 975,000 people changed jobs in the last year.

What's new this issue?

New table formats

The results from the February 2022 Participation, Job Search and Mobility survey will be released on 24 May 2022.

Ahead of this release, the results from the February 2021 survey, originally published on 7 July 2021, are republished below using new table formats. These new table formats incorporate two changes:

- State and territory data now available in all tables
- Tables are renumbered by topic

Some tables also incorporate additional age group data.

State and territory, age group, and other data breakdowns are available in [TableBuilder \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/participation-job-search-and-mobility-australia\)](/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/participation-job-search-and-mobility-australia) (as originally published on 7 July 2021).

These new table formats will be used for the February 2022 release on 24 May 2022.

Release schedule for Feb 2022 release

There are a number of planned changes to the Feb 2022 release of Participation, Job Search and Mobility (PJSM).

The release of PJSM data into TableBuilder has been delayed until later in the year in order to prepare for the release of 2021 Census data in TableBuilder. PJSM microdata will instead be published in ABS DataLab as a supplementary file for the [Longitudinal Labour Force microdata \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia\)](/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia).

On 6 May 2022:

- [Microdata from PJSM \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/participation-job-search-and-mobility-australia\)](/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/participation-job-search-and-mobility-australia) for 2015 to 2021 will be released in ABS DataLab as a supplementary file for the [Longitudinal Labour Force microdata \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia\)](/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia). This will provide an indication

of how the 2022 PJSM microdata will be presented for analysis on 27 May 2022.

On 24 May 2022:

- [Potential workers \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/potential-workers/latest-release\)](/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/potential-workers/latest-release) for Feb 2022 will be released.
- [Job mobility \(/statistics/labour/jobs/job-mobility/latest-release\)](/statistics/labour/jobs/job-mobility/latest-release) for Feb 2022 will be released.
- This page will be updated with tables containing February 2022 data for all three topics, including the Underemployed workers tables.

On 27 May 2022:

- [Microdata from PJSM \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/participation-job-search-and-mobility-australia\)](/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/participation-job-search-and-mobility-australia) for 2015 to 2022 will be released in ABS DataLab as a supplementary file alongside the April 2022 update to the [Longitudinal Labour Force microdata \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia\)](/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia). This will provide an alternative method of analysing PJSM data while TableBuilder is delayed.


On 24 Jun 2022:

- [Underemployed workers \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/underemployed-workers/latest-release\)](/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/underemployed-workers/latest-release) is predominately based on underemployment data from the Labour Force survey and will be updated with the latest data from the May 2022 Labour Force survey. It will also be supplemented with February 2022 PJSM data on underemployed part-time workers (published on this page from 24 May 2022).

Data downloads

How to use tables

1. Select a state or territory
2. The estimates shown in the table are for the most recent time period (February 2021)
3. The corresponding Time Series ID links to series of annual estimates for earlier time periods (2015 to 2020)

<div>  <div> Time Series Workbook 6228.0 Potential workers Table 1. Potential workers and discouraged job seekers Released at 11:30 am (Canberra time) Fri 29 Apr 2022 Table 1.2 - Potential workers and discouraged job seekers by state and territory, February 2021 </div> </div>						
<div> <div>Select a state or territory:</div> <div>Australian Capital Territory</div> <div>Time Series IDs</div> <div>Persons Males Females</div> <div>'000 '000 '000</div> <div>'000 '000 '000</div> </div>						
Expanded labour force status						
Civilian population	342.8	165.7	177.1	A1251733308	A125184562F	A125178946C
Employed	235.6	118.8	116.9	A125173294T	A125184526W	A125178910A
Underemployed (expanded definition)	21.0	11.7	9.3	A125173334X	A125184566R	A125178950V
Underemployed (headline definition)	12.5	6.7	5.8	A125173338J	A125184570F	A125178954C
Potential workers	30.3	11.8	18.5	A125173298A	A125184530L	A125178914K
Potential workers with job attachment (away from work or waiting to start)	5.4	2.7	2.7	A125173302F	A125184534W	A125178918V
Had a job to go to and available within 4 weeks	4.6	2.7	2.0	A125173322B	A125184554F	A125178928C
Had a job to go to and available last week (a sub-group of unemployed)	2.7	1.8	0.9	A125173282J	A125184514L	A125178898W
Had a job to go to and available within 4 weeks (but not last week)	1.9	0.9	1.1	A125173342X	A125184574R	A125178958L
Had a job to go to and not available within 4 weeks	0.8	0.0	0.8	A125173326X	A125184558R	A125178942V
Potential workers without job attachment	25.0	9.2	15.8	A125173354J	A125184586X	A125178970C
Wanted to work, actively looking and available within 4 weeks	7.9	3.5	4.5	A125173286T	A125184514L	A125178902A
Wanted to work, actively looking and available last week (a sub-group of unemployed)	7.5	3.2	4.3	A125173262X	A125184514L	A125178878L
Wanted to work, actively looking and available within 4 weeks (but not last week)	0.4	0.3	0.2	A125173274J	A125184514L	A125178890C
Wanted to work, actively looking and not available within 4 weeks	0.0	0.0	0.0	A125173306R	A125184538F	A125178922K
Wanted to work, available within 4 weeks but not actively looking	14.7	5.2	9.5	A125173270T	A125184510C	A125178894L
Discouraged job seekers - available within 4 weeks but discouraged from actively looking	1.6	0.0	1.6	A125173310F	A125184542W	A125178926V
Other job seekers - available within 4 weeks but not actively looking for other reasons	13.0	4.6	8.4	A125173314B	A125184546F	A125178930K
Wanted to work, not available within 4 weeks and not actively looking	2.4	0.5	1.9	A125173358T	A125184590R	A125178974L
Not potential workers	76.8	35.1	41.7	A125173266J	A125184498X	A125178882C
Did not want to work	68.9	32.7	36.3	A125173346J	A125184578X	A125178962C
Permanently unable to work	7.9	2.5	5.4	A125173350X	A125184582R	A125178966L

Potential workers

↕ Download all (14.72 MB)

Table 1. Potential workers and discouraged job seekers (previously Table 1)

↕ [Download XLSX](#)
[740.48 KB]

Table 2. Characteristics of discouraged job seekers and other potential workers (previously Table 8)

↕ [Download XLSX](#)
[4.06 MB]

Table 3. Duration since last job and main activity of discouraged job seekers and other potential workers (previously Table 9)

↕ [Download XLSX](#)
[3.24 MB]

Table 4. Main reason for not actively looking for work of persons who wanted to work and were available (previously Table 11)

↕ [Download XLSX](#)
[445.97 KB]

Table 5. Job search experience of unemployed persons (previously Table 12)

↕ [Download XLSX](#)
[1.32 MB]

Table 6. Characteristics of successful and unsuccessful job search experience (previously Table 13)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[1.04 MB]

Table 7. Number of job offers while looking for work (previously Table 14)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[2.29 MB]

Table 8. Main difficulty and duration of job search of unemployed persons (previously Table 15)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[2.91 MB]

Table 9. Main difficulty in finding work by age of unemployed persons (previously Table 16)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[2.01 MB]

Relative standard errors, Tables 1 to 9

[↓ Download ZIP](#)

[10.72 MB]

Job mobility

[↓ Download all \(10.76 MB\)](#)

Table 1. Labour mobility, retrenchments and duration of employment (previously Table 17)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[833.92 KB]

Table 2. Retrenchments and other reasons for ceasing a job last year (previously Table 10)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[4.37 MB]

Table 3. Change in employment characteristics of persons employed last year (previously Table 18) (updated 3 June 2022)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[1.27 MB]

Table 4. Separations and other changes in employment of people employed last year by industry (previously Table 19)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[2.25 MB]

Table 5. Engagements and other changes in employment of people employed

last year by industry (new table)

↓ [Download XLSX](#)
[2.22 MB]

Table 6. Separations and other changes in employment of people employed last year by occupation (previously Table 20)

↓ [Download XLSX](#)
[1.51 MB]

Table 7. Engagements and other changes in employment of people employed last year by occupation (new table)

↓ [Download XLSX](#)
[1.47 MB]

Relative standard errors, Tables 1 to 7 (updated 3 June 2022)

↓ [Download ZIP](#)
[7.7 MB]

Underemployed workers

↓ [Download all \(6.66 MB\)](#)

Table 1. Cyclical and structural underemployment of full-time and part-time workers (new table)

↓ [Download XLSX](#)
[1.38 MB]

Table 2. Extended measures of underutilisation (previously Table 22)

↓ [Download XLSX](#)
[204.92 KB]

Table 3. Underemployment status of full-time and part-time workers (previously Table 2)

↓ [Download XLSX](#)
[203.92 KB]

Table 4. Part-time workers who prefer more hours (previously Table 3)

↓ [Download XLSX](#)
[261.75 KB]

Table 5. Characteristics of part-time workers who prefer more hours (previously Table 4)

↓ [Download XLSX](#)
[916.52 KB]

Table 6. Duration of insufficient hours of underemployed part-time workers (previously Table 5)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[2.68 MB]

Table 7. Number of extra weekly hours preferred by underemployed part-time workers (previously Table 6)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[1.83 MB]

Table 8. Main difficulty in finding more work of underemployed part-time workers (previously Table 7)

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[564.75 KB]

Relative standard errors, Tables 2 to 8

[↓ Download ZIP](#)
[3.63 MB]

Microdata and TableBuilder: Participation,
Job Search and Mobility

[↓ Download all \(1.28 MB\)](#)

Table 1. Populations

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[929.26 KB]

Relative Standard Errors, Table 1

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[356.54 KB]

Microdata: Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Data item list, 2015 to 2022

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[669 KB]

What's new in 2021?

Topic based releases

From February 2021, statistics from the Participation, Job Search and Mobility survey are now published in three topic-based releases. See:

- [Underemployed workers \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/underemployed-workers/feb-2021\)](/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/underemployed-workers/feb-2021)
- [Potential workers \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/potential-workers/feb-2021\)](/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/potential-workers/feb-2021)
- [Job mobility \(/statistics/labour/jobs/job-mobility/feb-2021\)](/statistics/labour/jobs/job-mobility/feb-2021)

Data from the Participation, Job Search and Mobility survey for 2015 to 2021 will continue to be available in [TableBuilder \(/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/participation-job-search-and-mobility-australia\)](https://tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/participation-job-search-and-mobility-australia).

Potential workers and marginal attachment to the labour force

This release of statistics from the PJSM survey includes a simpler approach for presenting statistics on unused labour supply. The new [Potential workers \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/potential-workers/feb-2021\)](https://statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/potential-workers/feb-2021) release of PJSM data presents statistics all people who are not employed (i.e. regardless of their classification in the monthly Labour Force Survey as employed or not in the labour force), and the extent to which they may be regarded as "Potential workers" based on their circumstances and activities.

Historically, PJSM content has been presented using the marginal attachment framework and the characteristics of people "not participating in the labour force", based on the criteria used to derive unemployment (i.e. activity and/or availability).

While the new approach to presenting statistics for potential workers differs slightly from the traditional marginal attachment framework, and presents some population groups that do not entirely overlap with some of the marginally attached groups, there is still a strong alignment between them. Also statistics within the traditional marginal attachment framework are still available.

Revisions for people who had a job to go to

In 2018, a new category was introduced to the marginal attachment framework – “Had a job to go to.” – to reflect people who reported having a job but were not classified as employed (for example, as they had not yet started a new job already obtained, or had been away from work without pay for more than four weeks).

A review of the methods used to identify people who “had a job to go to” identified that some of the relatively small group of people who were not available to start work within four weeks were inadvertently excluded from this group. As a result, estimates have been revised for the period 2015 to 2021. New sub-categories have also been included to separate this group into those who were available to start last week, those who could start within 1-4 weeks, and those who were available in over 4 weeks.

New timeseries spreadsheets

The PJSM data downloads (Excel spreadsheets) have been redesigned to adopt the timeseries format used in publishing the monthly Labour Force statistics. Previously, most PJSM data downloads contained only one year of data, with revised historical data provided in a zip file of separate yearly tables.

The new timeseries format simplifies and consolidates the PJSM data downloads into a single set of 22 spreadsheets. Each spreadsheet contains timeseries data for 2015 to 2021. The timeseries format also facilitates automatic downloads and “data scraping,” with each timeseries provided a unique series ID. To assist with the transition to the timeseries format, two extra tabs have been provided in the spreadsheets. The first tab presents the data for February 2021 in the old table format. The second tab arranges the links to each timeseries in the same table format, using the unique timeseries IDs.

Estimates that exceed relative standard errors of 25% and 50% and should be used with caution will continue to be highlighted in the timeseries spreadsheets (cells with red triangles), however the relative standard error values will now be provided in separate zip file containing 22 “shadows tables”.

Improvements to TableBuilder

Many improvements have been made to the PJSM tablebuilder file to simplify the way data items are presented, increase the range of data items and generally enhance the usability of the product. These changes include:

- Previously, two separate data items measuring the same concept across different sub-populations (for example, availability to start work last week for people not in the labour force, and for people who were underemployed) were presented as two different output variables (specific to each sub-population). These have been combined into single output variables that can be applied across all populations.
- The way that data items are arranged in TableBuilder has also been changed to better reflect different conceptual groupings (rather than populations and data items) to assist with understanding the data and using the dataset. Data items are now listed under one of 17 conceptual groups.
- Each data item now has a descriptive label to describe which populations are not included under the main categories. For example, in the data item “Main difficulty in finding work,” the “Not applicable” category has been relabelled “Did not look for work”
- Hours worked data items have been aligned so they all provide data to the same level of detail. There is now consistency in the lowest available level (usually single hours or single weeks), and the way that these items are aggregated into higher level groupings. Hours worked data items are now included as parametric items, to allow for more

medians and means to be calculated.

- Occupation data is now provided to the unit group level (4 digit), although TableBuilder may suppress this level of detail if a requested table is too finely detailed. Occupation data can be aggregated to minor, sub-major and major group levels (3, 2 and 1 digit) to avoid a table suppression
- Some data item labels have been revised or shortened to improve interpretability (note that the concepts remain the same)

See [Microdata: Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/6226.0.00.001Main%20Features20Australia?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=6226.0.00.001&issue=Australia&num=&view=\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/6226.0.00.001Main%20Features20Australia?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=6226.0.00.001&issue=Australia&num=&view=) release for further information of the changes.

Rebenchmarking and seasonal factor adjustments

Since 2018, the PJSM data have been rebenchmarking every year to reflect the most recently available release of Estimated Resident Population (ERP) data and Labour Force Survey population benchmarks. The data for 2015 to 2021 have been revised to incorporate the population benchmarks that were used to produce estimates published in the April 2021 Labour Force, Australia.

To reduce the impact of seasonal effects on total employment, underemployment and unemployment, the benchmarks have been adjusted by factors based on seasonally adjusted Labour Force Survey estimates (as published in April 2021). For example, February estimates have a typical seasonal pattern of higher unemployment. The factors applied reduce the number of unemployed, to align with seasonally adjusted LFS estimates.

Trend series factors would usually be used in PJSM benchmarks but are currently not available, during the COVID period. Seasonally adjusted factors will be used until trend series are reinstated in Labour Force statistics.

Post release changes

3 June 2022:

- Updates to Job Mobility Table 3 - fixing position error for "Whether promoted or transferred with current employer in last 12 months" data.

29 April 2022:

- New table formats, including state and territory data

- New information regarding release schedule for the upcoming Feb 2022 issue

6 September 2021:

- Updates to Table 21 - revisions to Population 5: Part-time workers who would prefer full-time hours.
- Updates to Table 10 - revisions to table format to separate "left or lost job for other reasons" from the "Voluntary reasons (left job)" category. No revisions to data.

Previous catalogue number

This release previously used catalogue number 6226.0 (and 6226.0.55.001 in 2014).

Prior to 2014, statistics were published in:

- [Labour Mobility, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6209.0&viewtitle=Labour%20Mobility,%20Australia~February%202013~Latest~21/08/2013&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6209.0&issue=February%202013&num=&view=&_) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6209.0&viewtitle=Labour%20Mobility,%20Australia~February%202013~Latest~21/08/2013&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6209.0&issue=February%202013&num=&view=&_) (6209.0)
- [Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6220.0&viewtitle=Persons%20Not%20in%20the%20Labour%20Force,%20Australia~September%202013~Latest~26/03/2014&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6220.0&issue=September%202013&num=&view=&_) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6220.0&viewtitle=Persons%20Not%20in%20the%20Labour%20Force,%20Australia~September%202013~Latest~26/03/2014&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6220.0&issue=September%202013&num=&view=&_) (6220.0)
- [Job Search Experience, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6222.0&viewtitle=Job%20Search%20Experience,%20Australia~July%202013~Latest~05/02/2014&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6222.0&issue=July%202013&num=&view=&_) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6222.0&viewtitle=Job%20Search%20Experience,%20Australia~July%202013~Latest~05/02/2014&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6222.0&issue=July%202013&num=&view=&_) (6222.0)
- [Underemployed workers, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6265.0&viewtitle=Underemployed%20Workers,%20Australia~September%202013~Latest~26/02/2014&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6265.0&issue=September%202013&num=&view=&_) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/second+level+view?ReadForm&prodno=6265.0&viewtitle=Underemployed%20Workers,%20Australia~September%202013~Latest~26/02/2014&&tabname=Past%20Future%20Issues&prodno=6265.0&issue=September%202013&num=&view=&_) (6265.0)

Methodology

[Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia methodology, February 2021](#)